

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Ponto Beachfront Village Vision Plan Area is located within the City of Carlsbad, California, in northern San Diego County. The total Vision Plan Area is an approximately 130-acre, relatively narrow strip of land, approximately 1/8 mile wide and 1–1/2 miles long, located between Carlsbad Boulevard to the west and the San Diego Northern Railroad (SDNR) tracks and right-of-way to the east. Portions of the plan area extend north to Poinsettia Lane and south to La Costa Avenue. Under the Ponto Beachfront Village Vision Plan, the area considered viable for future development within the larger 130-acre area consists of approximately 50 acres (hereafter referred to as the “Ponto Area”), with its northern limit at Ponto Drive and its southern limit at the Batiquitos Lagoon. Refer to Chapter 3.0 where Figures 3-1 and 3-2 provide a regional map and a vicinity map, respectively. Figures 3-3 and 3-4 provide aerial views of the Ponto Area.

A portion of the Ponto Area lies within the South Carlsbad Coastal Redevelopment Area (SCCRA), which was established by the City of Carlsbad in July 2000. To guide redevelopment efforts within this area, the Ponto Beachfront Village Vision Plan was developed over an approximately two-year period from 2003 to 2005. Development of the Vision Plan and the proposed project design occurred with public input from property owners, residents of the City of Carlsbad, and others with interest in the project. Preparers of the Plan also met with representatives from the California Coastal Commission (CCC) and the California State Parks Division to address potential environmental concerns with regards to the project design.

The Vision Plan envisions a variety of uses on the 50-acre Ponto Area, which include a mixture of travel, recreation, commercial, neighborhood commercial, and residential uses. The properties that comprise the Ponto Area are under individual ownership and would be developed over future years, consistent with the guidelines set forth in the Vision Plan (which has not yet been reviewed by the City of Carlsbad Planning Commission or approved by the City Council).

This Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is intended to evaluate potential impacts that may result from future development of the Ponto Area. As the Vision Plan provides a general guide for development of the area, the EIR has been prepared to assess potential impacts to environmental resources within the development area boundaries, with consideration for all (previously) active development applications within the Ponto Area that were being processed at the time preparation of an EIR was requested. Therefore, the EIR provides an analysis of uses envisioned for the Ponto Area, as well as a general consideration for four individual development projects proposed within the Area to which the Vision Plan would be applicable.

1.1 Intended Uses of EIR

This document is identified as a “Program” Environmental Impact Report. Preparation of a Program EIR is appropriate for a series of actions that can be considered as one larger project, that have geographical relation, and as logical parts in the chain of contemplated actions in connection with issuance of rules, regulations, or plans. This type of EIR is intended to allow for the consideration of effects and alternatives in greater depth than would

be practical if individual landowners were to take separate action. In addition, cumulative impacts for an affected area can be addressed in a more cohesive manner.

This is an informational document that will inform public agency decision-makers and the public of significant environmental effects of a project, identify possible ways to minimize the significant effects, and describe reasonable alternatives to the project. Under the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), “the purpose of an environmental impact report is to identify the significant effect on the environment of a project, to identify alternatives to the project, and to indicate the manner in which those significant effects can be mitigated or avoided” (Public Resource Code 21002.1(a)).

This EIR is not a City policy document; rather, it addresses the potential impacts of development of the Ponto Area and analyzes project alternatives. The discretionary actions associated with the project include approval and/or adoption of the Ponto Beachfront Village Vision Plan, as well as amendments to the City of Carlsbad General Plan and Local Coastal Program (LCP) and the additional discretionary approvals and permits identified in Table 3-4, as well as any other approvals or permits necessary or desirable to implement the project at the level of the individual landowner. More specifically, this EIR will be used by the City of Carlsbad Planning Commission in assessing potential impacts resulting from the proposed project and in making their recommendation to the City Council on the Vision Plan, General Plan Amendment (GPA) and LCP amendment. This EIR will also be used by the City Council in assessing impacts and deciding whether to approve the proposed mitigation measures.

This EIR analyzes information available at the time of preparation of the document. As individual projects within the Ponto Area are proposed in the future, additional technical analyses may be required to determine whether a project is within the scope of the EIR, prepared to implement the Vision Plan, or to identify whether conditions have since changed and additional impacts not previously identified in the EIR exist. If such conditions exist, additional CEQA action (e.g. addendum to the EIR, supplemental EIR, etc.) may be required to assess potential impacts and to identify appropriate mitigation measures to reduce impacts to less than significant with individual project implementation.

1.2 Project Background

1.2.1 History of Project

As seen in Figure 3-3, a portion of the Ponto Area is within the South Carlsbad Coastal Redevelopment Area, which was established in July 2000. The SCCRA Redevelopment Plan gives the Carlsbad Housing and Redevelopment Commission the legal authority to use various powers to achieve the Redevelopment Plan’s goals. In addition, the Ponto Area has been planned for a mixture of travel, recreation, commercial, neighborhood commercial, and residential uses, as identified in the City of Carlsbad General Plan. The Vision Plan has been prepared to guide redevelopment of the site consistent with the goals of the SCCRA Redevelopment Plan, City General Plan, and other applicable plans and policies set forth in the City’s Municipal Code.

To guide redevelopment efforts within the SCCRA, the Ponto Beachfront Village Vision Plan was developed over an approximately two-year period from 2003 to 2005. Development of the Plan and the proposed project design occurred with public input from property owners,

residents of the City of Carlsbad, and others with interest in the project. Preparers of the Plan also met with representatives from the California Coastal Commission and the California State Parks Division to address potential environmental concerns with regards to the project design.

In conjunction with preparation of the Ponto Beachfront Village Vision Plan, an environmental assessment was completed for the Ponto Area to identify potential impacts resulting from development of the project site. The assessment concluded that future development in conformance with the Vision Plan may have the potential to result in significant environmental impacts unless mitigation measures were applied to development in the areas of transportation/traffic, noise, biology, cultural resources and agriculture. Appropriate mitigation measures for these impacts were incorporated into the environmental assessment for the Vision Plan to be applied to all future development proposals in the area.

A Public Hearing was held before the City Council on June 28, 2005, to consider the Ponto Beachfront Village Vision Plan and related actions, including approval of the Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) and the proposed Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, General Plan Amendment (GPA 05-04), and the Local Coastal Program Amendment (LCPA 05-01). The item was continued to July 19, 2005, when the City Council directed city staff to prepare a full environmental impact report to analyze the impacts of the Ponto Beachfront Village Vision Plan, as staff noted that potential impacts to traffic, noise, agriculture, cultural and biological resources may occur. All active applications for development within the boundaries of the Ponto Area were subsequently placed on hold until preparation of an EIR is completed and approved.

1.2.2 Notice of Preparation and Scoping Meetings

A Notice of Preparation (NOP) for an EIR (published on June 11, 2006), was issued for the Ponto Beachfront Village Vision Plan (Case No. EIR 05-05). The NOP was sent to the State Clearinghouse on June 11, 2006, for a 30-day public review period ending July 12, 2006. The NOP was published in the local newspaper, and was forwarded to other city, state and federal officials, public agencies, and other interested individuals as applicable.

A public scoping meeting was held on June 22, 2006 at the City of Carlsbad Faraday Center, located at 1635 Faraday Avenue, to allow for public comment on the preparation of the Ponto Beachfront Village Vision Plan EIR. During this meeting, the background and scope of the Vision Plan were presented to the public by the City, and the public was invited to comment and ask questions regarding the proposed Vision Plan and environmental impacts that may potentially result. Written comments from the public were received during the 30-day review period for the NOP pertaining to the scope of the EIR and environmental issues of concern that the public desired to be addressed in the preparation of the EIR. These comments are included in Appendix A of this EIR.

Property Owners Workshops

Two workshops were held (August 13, 2003 and December 15, 2003) by city staff for Ponto Area property owners to update them on the progress of the Vision Plan as it was being prepared, to gather input on specific issues, and to hear feedback on land use alternatives. The following objectives for development of the Ponto Area were established based on public input received during these meetings:

Objectives:

- a. Provide options for land use;
- b. Increase flexibility for property owners to respond to market conditions;
- c. Increase opportunities and individual decision-making for small lot property owners;
- d. Continue to consider environmental factors and conditions; and,
- e. Create a neighborhood and amenities that contribute to the surrounding area and City as a whole.

1.3 Structure of the EIR

Volume I. Volume I of this EIR contains the environmental analysis prepared as the result of a request for preparation of an EIR. The eight sections of the EIR are as follows:

- **Section 1.0 Introduction.** This section provides an overview of the project, including project background, legal requirements of the EIR, and a summary of the structure of the EIR.
- **Section 2.0 Executive Summary.** This section provides a summary of the proposed project, potentially significant environmental impacts identified through the EIR process, potential areas of controversy, and alternatives to the proposed project.
- **Section 3.0 Project Description.** This section provides a detailed description of the proposed project including project location and background, existing regulatory environment, uses proposed, infrastructure improvements required, and project objectives. In addition, the intended uses of the EIR are discussed, and a summary of discretionary actions is given.
- **Section 4.0 Environmental Setting.** This section provides an overview of the environmental setting surrounding the project, including a summary of applicable regulatory plans and policies and General Plan and zoning information, as well as a summary of general climate, topography, and surrounding land uses.
- **Section 5.0 Environmental Impact Analysis and Mitigation Measures.** This section provides a technical analysis of the potential significant environmental impacts resulting from implementation of the Vision Plan. Mitigation measures are given to reduce impacts to less than significant as applicable.
- **Section 6.0 Alternatives to the Proposed Project.** This section provides a series of alternatives to the proposed project to identify optional development scenarios under which potential significant impacts resulting from the proposed project may be reduced (as compared to the proposed project).
- **Section 7.0 Analysis of Long-Term Effects.** This section discusses the potential long-term effects, cumulative impacts, significant irreversible impacts, unavoidable significant impacts, and areas where no significant impacts would occur as the result of the proposed project.

- **Section 8.0. References.** This section identifies the technical reports and other documentation used in preparing the EIR analysis and identifies the persons responsible for preparation of the EIR.

Volumes II and III. Volumes II and III of this EIR contain the technical reports upon which the EIR analysis is based.

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